



It was a great honor to hear from Dr. Ben Carson, world-renowned retired pediatric neurosurgeon and Director of Housing and Urban Development during the Trump administration. Dr. Carson is a man of faith and a courageous voice for truth into our nation. He reminds every one of us that when we honor God with our lives, He writes a future for us better than any we could have imagined for ourselves. Dr. Carson's message is timely for the desperate season in which we find ourselves. He urges us to have the faith to believe God will help our country in this pivotal hour, and to always remember that we cannot be "the land of the free" if we're not "the home of the brave."

*"Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.*

*He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and
young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.*

They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

Isaiah 40:28-31

They are trying to divide us from within—starting with our families:

*John Adams, our second president, said our constitution was designed for a moral and religious people and is inadequate for the government of any other. Well, right now we seem to have "any other," and they don't seem to be paying close attention to the values and principles that made us into a great country. And the big problem for those who don't like our country and want to fundamentally change it is **we stand in the way of their aspirations**. They cannot overcome us militarily. We're too strong. The only thing they can do is destroy us from within. Jesus said it best: "The house divided against itself cannot stand." That's why there is so much effort aimed at dividing us as a nation—of having us at each other's throats, throwing out our Judeo-Christian value of loving your neighbor and replacing it with "cancel your neighbor if they don't agree with you." Where do the fortifying values that people have come from? **They come from the family**. And therefore, that becomes the target, the critical target for those who want to change us. — points from Ben Carson's presentation*

*** How do you feel about the deep divisions in our nation today? What are some of the consequences you see in our culture because of this division?**

***Describe a time when you engaged with someone who thinks differently than you. What was the outcome?**

***In what ways can stronger families build stronger individuals?**

Let's remember there IS absolute truth—especially regarding gender:

When you talk to a lot of young people today, you hear them saying things like, "This is my truth. That is your truth." What happened to THE truth? Think about it. Jesus said, "I am the truth," and that's what we should be thinking about. And it goes back to the very fundamentals of family formation.

So, what did God design as a family? In the beginning He created Adam, but He said Adam needed a help mate. But God did not take a bone from Adam's foot to make Eve—to be somebody to be walked on and held as an inferior. God didn't take a piece of the skull, to be somebody above Adam. God took a rib from Adam's side—someone to be his equal, his help mate, someone to help form the family.

Interestingly enough, God created them in such a way that we could tell the difference between a man and a woman—even if you follow the science—because the science says if you have two X chromosomes, you're a woman. And if you have an X and a Y, you're a man. There isn't anything else. It's those two things.

The whole concept of working together, having a support structure with people you can depend on was part of God's original design. That's what happens in a good family structure. — points from Ben Carson's presentation

***How do you understand the difference between things that are sometimes true or true for certain people (relative truth) and things that are always true for everyone (absolute truth)? How would you encourage someone toward THE Truth?**

*** As people made in God's image, we look to God to understand who we are. What are some aspects of God's character that humans are meant to imitate? What attributes belong to Him alone?**

The Lord will renew our strength:

As of 2021, only three in ten adults regularly attend church and only 47% of adults claimed religious affiliation. We're officially becoming a secular country. But it's not too late to turn that around. We can do it.

Let's read the rest of Isaiah, chapter 40: "Even though the youth shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall, but they that weight upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint."

Is that not a call for a revival in our country? Isn't that what we should be thinking about? But Jesus said, "If you follow Me, you're going to be persecuted. They persecuted me; they'll persecute you."

*So, what does it mean? It means we have to have courage, and we have to recognize that even if somebody tries to cancel you or create problems for you, what is that little inconvenience against the backdrop of eternity? That's what we need to be thinking about—**the long-term benefits of having strong families, healthy relationships, faith in God, and of being renewed.** — points from Ben Carson's presentation*

***Share a time from your life when you felt weary. How did the Lord *renew your strength*?**

***Take time to talk about what stood out to you from Dr. Carson's message. Was there something you learned? Was there something that challenged you? What was a highlight for you?**

PROCLAMATION Isaiah 40:28-31

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but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Amen.